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ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

511 426 Analysis of the family budgets of the agriculturists in the village revealed that 10% of them were surplus, 24% were balanced and the rest were deficit budgets. Exact figures regarding the extent of indebtedness could not be obtained as the people invariably sought to conceal information on this subject. According to our rough estimate, 55% to 60% of the families are indebted. As relatively few persons can get agricultural or land improvement loans from the government at a reasonable rate of interest, and as there is no co-operative society in the village, most people have to take recourse to the money-lenders either in the village or, preferably, in a neighbouring one. Petty loans may be obtained from well-to-do shopkeepers and peasants. The rate of interest varies greatly. For large loans a mortgage is generally insisted upon, and anything between 6% and 12% compound interest is charged. For petty loans interest is charged at the rate of 2 annas per rupee per month. If ornaments or other valuables are pawned, the rate of interest is reduced even for the smaller loans. Borrowing in kind also takes place. Seeds are often obtained on loan, and are returned after the harvest with 25% interest. In several cases the indebtedness of the family could be attributed to over-spending in socio-religious ceremonies and litigation rather than to agricultural needs.

241 432 The organization of agricultural pursuits rests mainly on the head of the family, although grown-up sons—if they are living with the parents—are also consulted. When buying or selling land the advice of the elders of the extended family is always obtained. This has to be done before mortgaging family property against loans. The scope for individual initiative and innovations is very limited, for the system of agriculture still largely follows the traditional patterns and is governed to a great extent by the agricultural lore passed from generation to generation through oral tradition.

241 465 Most agriculturists can manage the cultivation of their fields with the help of family labour. The traditional system on inter-caste relations secures for them the specialized services of the occupational castes. The more well-to-do landowners have Madiga families attached to them. However, the migration of some Madiga families and concentration of considerable areas of land in the possession of a few families make it almost essential for many agriculturists to employ additional labour. In the busy season even

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437 and some of the occupational castes, four different types of economic dealings have been mentioned: a system of family affiliation under which the family of the occupational caste attaches itself to a family or families of agriculturists for rendering to them services in their agricultural pursuits, similar affiliation for performing definite functions in connection with socio-religious rites and ceremonies, barter of professional services between occupational castes, and finally the rendering of services within the domain of caste monopolies for cash payment. Six occupational castes assist the agriculturists by rendering them services within the 511 field of their functional specialization. It will be interesting to analyse the exact contribution made by each of these four types of 434 economic dealings to their total earnings. The averages in the 437 following table have been calculated from family budgets of the different castes in question. Where the number of families was small, such as among potters, carpenters and blacksmiths, 100% sample was taken; in others a 50% random sample was taken. However, it is necessary to point out that the budgets were made mostly on the basis of verbal estimates of the families. Only substantial payments received during a period of three years were checked. In making these calculations income from the cultivation of land belonging to the family as well as from agricultural labour lying outside the occupational specialization of the family have not been taken into account.

TABLE XI

Caste	*Percentage of income from:*				
	Traditional system of family affiliation	*Services at socio-religious ceremonies*	*Barter of occupational services*	*Services for cash payment*	*Miscellaneous*
Potter	18	3	1	78	–
Carpenter	60	1	2	36	1
Blacksmith	60	–	2	37	1
Barber	40	12	2	43	3
Washerman	30	10	2	55	3
Madiga	50	8	–	40	2

From the above table it will be clear that the carpenters, blacksmiths and barbers derive 63%, 62% and 54% respectively of their total income from one or more types of traditional arrange-

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ment. As all the Madiga families in the village are not affiliated to the agriculturists, in these calculations their average income from these sources comes to only 58%, although a few decades ago, when the traditional system worked better, it must have been considerably more. The potters earn much more by selling their earthenware in the markets than by their traditional arrangements with the families of agriculturists. Similarly, some of the washermen have now a clientele in the city. Twice or thrice every month they collect clothes from them, delivering at the same time the previous washing. The barbers have a limited number of clients in the neighbouring villages. All the castes in this group derive an appreciable portion of their total earnings from private work done outside the system of traditional arrangements.

The economy of the village is only partially self-sufficient. The traders, both Komtis and Muslims, buy their goods wholesale from the city and retail them in their shops in the village. People often buy their requirements from the city if they happen to go there. They frequently visit the weekly bazaars also. The weavers buy their spindles from Hyderabad wholesalers, and depend for the sale of their cloth on the cluster of several nearby villages. The customers of the goldsmith are also distributed in several villages of the neighbourhood. The Gaondla produces all the fermented palm-juice required in the settlement from the trees around the village, but he has also to keep a certain quantity of liquor distilled in the city for such customers as may order it occasionally. The occupation of stone-breaking takes the Vaddars to several villages in the neighbourhood where there are no members of their caste. Finally, Madiga families acquiring a reputation for their skill in curing and tanning hides, or in their leather-work, are also commissioned by outsiders occasionally to do some work for them.

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amass wealth, and spend the rest of it worrying about its safety. 554
The cultivator need not be rich. It is enough if he has not to lower 829
himself before others begging for their favours.'

2. STANDARD OF LIVING: FOUR LEVELS

In Shamirpet four levels denoting different standards of living 511
are vaguely recognized by the villagers. They are:

i. Rich.
ii. Well-to-do.
iii. Average.
iv. Poor.

It is difficult to lay down any precise rules to classify the different families living in the village into these levels on the basis of their standards of living. As these distinctions are based primarily on the differences in earning, it may be generally said that families with an income of Rs. 200 per month or more would be regarded as 'rich', those earning between Rs. 100 and 200 as 'well-to-do', those earning Rs. 45 to 100 as 'average' and those earning less than Rs. 45 as 'poor'. The average family unit in these calculations consists of five—three adults and two children.

According to this test which reflects the consensus of opinion in the village, our socio-economic survey of the community would indicate the following classification of the village population:

Rich	4%	Average	34%
Well-to-do	22%	Poor	40%

The following table indicates average percentage of consumer expenditure on different items, based on the family budgets of three consecutive years of a total sample of one hundred and twenty families representing the four levels of living:

ITEMS AND PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURE

Level	1 *Food (including fats and spices)*	2 *Clothing (including ornaments)*	3 *Feasts and ceremonies*	4 *Repairs and maintenance of the house*	5 *Luxuries (including tobacco and liquor)*	6 *Miscellaneous (entertainments, medicine, etc.)*
	%	%	%	%	%	%
1. Rich	34	15	18	11	12	10
2. Well-to-do	40	14	18	10	12	6
3. Average	48	12	12	8	15	5
4. Poor	56	10	11	5	15	3

From the above it is clear that on each successive lower level the percentage of expenditure on food—that is, on cereals, meat,

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511 vegetables, salt, spices and fats—increases steadily. The 'rich' and the 'well-to-do' spend more on clothes and ornaments: on the lower levels expenditure on these items is proportionately less. Similarly expenditure on feasts and ceremonies is proportionately higher in the two upper levels and lower in the poorer sections. Maintenance and repairs of the house and all immovable property other than agricultural land, cattle and implements necessitate a higher percentage of expenditure on each higher level successively. This is accounted for by the fact that on the lower levels people do most of this work themselves, and do not hire any labour. It appears rather paradoxical that the 'average' and 'poor' people spend proportionately more on 'luxuries', but this can be explained by the fact that tobacco and liquor are included under this head and most people in the village are addicted to the habits of smoking and drinking. Finally, under the head 'miscellaneous' —which includes expenditure on entertainments, recreation, medicine and other unforeseen domestic expenses—the 'poor' spend the least, and on each higher level the expenditure is greater.

The visible manifestations of a family's standard of living are: type of dwelling and household possessions, clothing and ornaments, nature of work done by the members of the family and diet. Brief reference has already been made to the different types of dwellings and their average possessions. In a general way it can be said that a house and its belongings indicate the owner's standard of living. Gold and silver ornaments as well as expensive clothes are regarded as marks of superior economic status. Brahmins, Komtis, rich Reddis and well-to-do Muslims are expected 'to wear clothes befitting their status'. Persons belonging to lower castes, particularly untouchables, are criticized for imitating the dress-styles of the higher castes, and even when they acquire wealth they are expected to continue the traditional style of clothing suitable for their humble social status.

In the next two sections we shall examine the division of labour and differences in diet on the four levels of living in the community.

3. WORK: DIVISION OF LABOUR

463 Division of labour in the community is governed by a variety of factors. Important among them are: caste, sex, age and social status.

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AW1 India
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426 poorer classes, when they find that their debts have overgrown their income, generally hand over their lands to the lenders of money.

167 Emigrants leave the village for two reasons:—(1) indebtedness and (2) want of sufficient work and means of living. As previously stated two families of weavers have gone to Rajahmundry for factory work, and one family of Komatis to the Gōdāvari Agency. Some of the Panchamas and toddy drawers go to Rangoon, Moulmein, Singapore, and formerly went to Natal and the Transvaal. They return at the end of 1½ or 2 years. Some have made a little profit by going out, but not much. One effect of such emigration is to prevent people from lending money freely to all. The poorer classes do not get loans so easily now for want of security.

164 *Sanitary condition.*—There is no malaria. Six years ago there was a heavy attack of cholera, the number of deaths being between 150 and 200. It was impossible to keep any accurate account. Two years ago there was a serious attack of smallpox, when about 160 adults and children together died. It is significant that among Brahmans not a single person was attacked by either of these diseases. Among the Vaisyas the number of deaths was 5 and 3, respectively, among the Sudras it was 50 from cholera, 60 from small-pox. All the rest of the cases were in the lower castes. The death-rate of the children was far greater than that of adults.

165 The village statistics show 480 children born in the five years from 1911 to 1915, 321 under 14 years of age dying during these 759 years. The record of births is probably very defective, but the rate of mortality among infants and young children is certainly terribly high. There is no effective medical assistance available. The quack doctors of the village are merely deceitful and ignorant and practice the trade with no schooling or knowledge. Men following various occupations, who do not earn much at their proper calling, are the doctors of the village, who administer red or black powders to the patient one after another, call the fever this and that, starve the patient for 15 or 20 days, keep him in comfortable delusions all the while, and having made up 20 or 30 rupees send him to an untimely grave. The villagers prefer to entrust their lives to these doctors than to risk them in the hands of an English trained doctor. The hospital assistant near by has not won a good name for English medicine.

The wife of the barber is the nurse for all cases of pregnancy, and the general authority on all cases of feminine complaints.

758 For want of education, people do not observe the elementary principles of sanitation. For instance in times of epidemic diseases they do not isolate patients. They spread the disease by cleaning all kinds of cloth in village tanks. They do not reveal the disease immediately after the attack. They keep the patients in crowded houses and move and eat and sleep very close to them. Even for ordinary fevers, the patient is starved for 5 or 6 days, so that he will be weak and useless for work for a number of days afterwards.

● 511 356 The poorer classes are often subjected to disease for want of healthy and sufficient food, and clean surroundings. Every poor man has two or three cattle at least; and their huts being crowded, with limited space, it happens generally that the cattle are kept

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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very close to the human inmates. Rubbish and cow-dung are stored up in front of the houses, while in rainy seasons the whole becomes a stagnant pool of water, rubbish and cow-dung. 511 356

The houses of the Pariahs are filled with an awful smell of skins, bones and putrid flesh. The insufficiency of food that they suffer from tempts them to fill their bellies with toddy and other stimulants that ultimately ruin their health.

The Sudras are perfectly temperate and simple in habits and food. The "twice-born" castes are bound to marry their girls before twelve. The lower castes are not bound to do so. But the Sudras and lower castes actually marry their girls at a very early age, both to satisfy the anxiety of elders and for fear they may not have the money afterwards. I know a case in which a girl two months old was married to a boy of two years, the boy dying a year later of cholera. They maintain strict widowhood like the Brahmans. There is no purdah. 582

The villagers bathe and wash clothes and also wash their cattle in the same tank as that used for drinking. 515

Education.—There is one school; its accommodation and equipment being a rented house, an atlas, a globe, text books, some pictures of common objects, civics primers, dumb-bells, a black board, a desk, benches for boys to sit upon. 871

Elementary education is given up to the fourth standard, in the vernacular, in history, arithmetic, geography, civics, etc. This education is most unpractical and incomplete and ill-suited to the villagers, who do not proceed to college classes. It does not enable them to read good books in Telugu or to learn even the elementary principles of sanitation. They are never made to feel that they are citizens of a world, or an empire, or a province, outside the narrow bounds of their village.

Attendance—	Boys.	Girls.
1913	19	4
1914	9	3
1915	45	12
1916	54	8
1917	48	6

About 30 per cent of the adults can read the vernacular; two persons can read and talk English. There is a noted musician in the village but no other pandit. Not less than 25 or 30 per cent of those who have passed through the school have lost their capacity to write or cipher after leaving. One boy has proceeded to the Mechanical Engineering course in the Victoria Technical Institute, Bombay; another to the Arts course in the Madras University. [91]

There are 90 to 100 books, of which 70 are owned by Brahmans, made up of novels, dramas, puranas, the Mahabharata and stories. Among the Sudras, a development of literary taste, though in a very small degree, is perceptible. There are many devotional songs and lives of Telugu saints, while stories of the epics rendered into songs and recited by "Bhagavathars" are very frequent. The latest innovation is the introduction of dramas. Novels are still a rarity, as well as histories. No newspaper comes to the village. 538

The village has no temple except that of the village goddess. Her festival is celebrated with much slaughter of cattle and goats given by their owners whenever there is an outbreak of cholera or small-pox; or, failing these, once in four or five years. The cost is 796